

Recycling Detectives

Primary Traveling Trunk

Suggested Grades: 3rd – 4th

This Traveling Trunk, available from the Waukesha County Division of Solid Waste and Recycling, is available for a free 2-week loan period. Each lesson includes some “Together Time” for a group activity and discussion as well as “Individual Action” for students to reinforce some concepts individually or in small groups. Also included are materials and classroom décor. For a complete listing of resources, please visit our website at www.waukeshacounty.gov/recycling or call 896-8300.

Lesson One: Litterbugs and Resource Hogs (40 Minutes)

This lesson explores the difference between litter and trash. It includes a story as well as a sorting activity that introduces the ideas of ‘reducing’ and ‘reusing’. Skits the students perform reinforces the introduction of basic concepts.

Lesson Two: Land-Fill-Ups (30 minutes)

This lesson shows students where ‘away’ is when they throw their trash ‘away’. It also provides several options for students to model landfills, one of which is edible! It is a great way to show students where their trash goes if they do not recycle.

Lesson Three: The Recycle Cycle (30 minutes)

This lesson introduces the concept of recycling using clay. There is also a brief video showing the recycling process of a PET bottle. This lesson introduces the cyclical nature of recycling and challenges students to mimic the cycle in an individual follow-up action.

Lesson Four: What goes in the Recycle Cycle? (20 minutes)

This lesson reviews what can be recycled in Waukesha County. It also has students create an area that they can recycle in the classroom. Students are challenged to create an advertisement for print or radio to convince people to recycle using statistics from a story.

Lesson Five: All Natural (10 minutes)

This lesson introduces the concept of natural resources. It shows students what resources are saved by recycling and also shows the final products that recyclables are made into.

Lesson Six: Reduce (10 minutes)

This lesson shows students the amount of waste created by our society and uses math to show simple ways to reduce the amount of trash they create.

Lesson Seven: Reuse (20 minutes)

This lesson shows ways to reuse items that otherwise would enter the waste stream. It uses a book and art to explore different uses for objects normally deemed as trash.

Lesson Eight: Get in the Action (varies)

This lesson introduces ways for students to actively promote recycling in their schools and communities. There is also a great binder that utilizes the scientific method to chart a recycling project.

Lesson Nine: Tour The MRF (20 minutes)

This lesson shows students what occurs at the Materials Recycling Facility through a story as well as a chance to model the MRF through a simulation.

Lesson Ten: Cleaning Chemicals – How To Be Safe (20 minutes)

This lesson introduces Household Hazardous Waste and shows the destructive effects of not being careful with these materials. It also provides alternatives to cleaners that the students can safely make themselves to practice liquid measuring.